

When Awareness Becomes Natural:

A Guide to Cultivating Awareness in Everyday Life

By Sayadaw U Tejaniya

Chapter One: Our Relationship to Reality

First, we must ask ourselves: What is our relationship to reality? What is our understanding of life?

From this, we will find meditation is really the only sensible approach to our reality and the problems that can arise from living.

We can use meditation as an escape or avoidance from life, or we can use it as a practice to attend to life. When we start bringing awareness to the way we live, it soon becomes apparent that we have little understanding of ourselves or the environment we live in. We are facing a constant battle just to maintain a little happiness in our lives.

The problems that we create out of fear, boredom, loneliness, routine, despair, and repetition (to name just a few) are the reality we face. Life is a serious business, so it takes a serious mind to investigate and understand what makes us suffer.

Before we can bring about a shift from this reality, we must first look at "what is" and understand it. We must look at life as it is and come into intimate contact with it. It is not just about accumulating knowledge or seeing life as an abstraction, but more about a simple understanding of what it is really like to live life as a human being.

It is only a quiet, dedicated, and meditative mind that can penetrate and find true understanding into these difficulties that we create in our lives, and from this see through the confusion and chaos that can dominate our minds.

With this understanding, the wisdom that is inherent in us all is slowly revealed.

The joy that comes from recognizing this wisdom will create interest and understanding, which in turn will motivate us to reveal more. This then allows us to look deeper into how we experience life and our relationship to the world around us.

From this position of wisdom, life becomes more meaningful and more stable, and happiness can then flow in a more natural way.